

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A condiment dispenser for dispensing particulate materials, said dispenser comprising:

(a) an elongated tubular body with a central longitudinal axis, said body being substantially symmetrical about said axis and having a pair of opposed ends and a hollow interior for holding a supply of said materials;

(b) a top structure for closing said tubular body at one of said ends;

(c) a bottom structure defining an outlet opening for selectively dispensing pre-measured quantities of said material through said outlet opening, and supporting said tubular body vertically on a support surface;

(d) said bottom structure including a rotor mounted to rotate about said longitudinal axis of said body;

(e) a holding structure having a plurality of material holding compartments of a shape matching the shape of said outlet opening,

(f) said rotor being drivable coupled to create rotation of said compartments relative to said outlet to successively discharge the contents of said compartments downwardly through said outlet.

2. A dispenser as in Claim 1 in which said top structure includes rotatable attachment/detachment means including screw threads to enable easy attachment/detachment to said body.

3. A dispenser as in Claim 1 in which said body is substantially cylindrical and said rotor has an outer wall forming a part of the outer surface of said dispenser.

4. A dispenser as in Claim 4 in which said outer wall of said rotor has an upper end and a lower end, said lower end having a diameter greater than said upper end.

5. A dispenser as in Claim 2 in which said top structure has a longitudinally-slidable dispensing spout extendable away from and slidable towards said body to close said spout.

6. A dispenser as in Claim 3 in which said outer wall of said rotor has a substantially frustro-conical shape.

7. A dispenser as in Claim 1 including a slidably mounted cover for said outlet opening, said cover being adapted to be slidable between a first position covering said outlet opening and a second position in which it does not cover said outlet opening.

8. A dispenser as in Claim 1 including a cover for said outlet opening, said cover being mounted to rotate about

said longitudinal axis between a first position covering said outlet, and a second position in which said outlet is not covered.

9. A dispenser as in Claim 1 including a ring member with a plurality of detent recesses, an alignment and detent mechanism including said ring and a ring-shaped spring member having an offset portion for fitting successively into each of a plurality of detent recesses, each adapted to align said outlet opening with each of said compartments upon rotation of said spring member relative to said ring member.

10. A dispenser as in Claim 9 in which said offset portion is shaped and positioned to snap into each detent recess with a "click".

11. A dispenser as in Claim 9 in which said offset portion has an engagement edge for engaging one wall of each of said recesses to prevent rotation of said rotor in one direction.

12. A dispensing container for dispensing comestible materials in pre-measured quantities from said dispensing container comprising:

a manually holdable container for containing said material;

a dispensing mechanism secured to said container, said dispensing mechanism having a circular first member with a plurality of radial compartments and a gate member with an outlet opening, said gate member and said first member being rotatably mounted with respect to one another to successively empty said compartments through said outlet opening;

a detent mechanism comprising a plurality of recesses in a circular array around the periphery of said first member;

a ring-shaped spring member with an offset portion shaped to fit into said recesses with said outlet opening in alignment with one of said compartments at each of said recesses; and

said spring member being shaped to ride up and out of each of said recesses and to be thrust, by spring action, into the next recess with a detectable click.

13. A dispenser as in Claim 12 in which said ring-shaped spring member is split and has an edge to engage with a wall of each of said recesses to provide a stop against rotation of said gate member relative to said first member in one direction of rotation.

14. A dispenser as in Claim 12 in which said ring-shaped spring member is made of stainless steel and has a pair of notches and said gate member has a pair of projections

to fit into said notches to hold said spring and said gate member to rotate together relative to said first member.